

# REGISTER OF CLASSIFICATION DECISIONS

Date of entry in Register: 19 December 2001  
 Name of applicant/court: Comptroller of Customs  
 Applicant to the Labelling Body: Not Applicable  
 Title of Publication: Salò O Le 120 Giornate Di Sodoma  
 Other Known Titles: Salo, Or The 120 Days Of Sodom  
 Director: Pier Paolo Pasolini  
 Producer: Alberto Grimaldi  
 Publisher: Not Applicable  
 Author: Not Applicable  
 Format: DVD  
 Country of Origin: Italy  
 Language: Italian with English subtitles

.....

## Components of film originally examined:

Menu:	Play Film Select Chapter Extras		
Feature:	Salò O Le 120 Giornate Di Sodoma	Running time:	111.48
Other Moving Components:	Copyright Warning / British Film Institute Notice Director's Foreword Poster Gallery	Running time:	0.22 3.08 0.53
Other Components:	Director's Biography Also Available Salo Weblink		
		Total Running time:	116.11

Excision/Alteration: No Excisions Recommended.

Reason(s) for Excision:

Not Applicable.

... Please turn over

Classification Decision:

Objectionable except if the availability of the publication is restricted to persons who have attained the age of 18 years.

Display Conditions:

Nil.

Descriptive Note:

Contains strong violence, sexual violence and scenes of torture and degradation.

.....

Direction to issue a label has been given on: Not Applicable.

.....

**SUMMARY OF THE REASONS FOR DECISION:**

The DVD *Salò O Le 120 Giornate Di Sodoma* is classified as:  
Objectionable except if the availability of the publication is restricted to persons who have attained the age of 18 years.

The DVD is comprised of the feature and a number of additional components including the *Director's Foreword* and *Director's Biography*. The feature is an adaptation by the renowned Italian director Paolo Pasolini of a work by the Marquis de Sade. The work uses a story involving the sexual violence and torture inflicted on a group of young people by their sadistic captors to make a powerful anti-fascistic statement inspired by the horrific events of the Second World War. The material is intended to shock and repulse the viewer, in the hope that such atrocities will not be repeated.

The publication contains material which is described under s3(2) of the Films, Videos, and Publications Classification Act 1993 (FVPC Act), however the publication is not considered to either promote or support, or tend to promote or support, any of these activities. The intent of the publication is clearly to condemn these activities. In that the publication depicts acts involving the infliction of cruelty and serious physical harm, sexual violence, and sexual and physical conduct of a highly degrading nature, and shows the perpetrators deriving sexual pleasure from undertaking these activities, the publication does contain material relevant to s3(3). After consideration and consultation, it is felt that excisions would distort and dilute the message that the film carries, as well as removing the context for what occurs in the film.

In terms of s3(4) of the FVPC Act, the dominant effect of the publication is of a relentless and shocking presentation of atrocities inflicted upon a group of young persons. The Classification Office notes the merit of the publication and believes that it does have sufficient artistic, historical and cultural merit to warrant it being made available. It is unlikely to appeal to anyone without a background knowledge of either de Sade, Pasolini, or Fascism, and is therefore likely to be viewed by a limited number of people.

Considerations under the FVPC Act have been weighed against the right to freedom of expression set out in s14 of the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990. The absence of any discernible injury occurring since the film was screened in the 1997 New Zealand Film Festival would indicate that restricting the publication to persons aged 18 years and over is sufficient to prevent any likely injury to the public good. This restriction is reasonable, justified and in accordance with the law.

OFLC Ref: 101245